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equal,—and though the Bass, also, is generally of the easiest mould, yet the other parts are often learnedly ornate. The *Cantus* and the *Médus*, as parts reserved for the more select and skilful voices, are sometimes cleverly contrived, and frequently present very ingenious syncopations. 'This custom of writing ornate or learned "parts upon a plain song" was the custom of the Church long before Ravenscroft's time. The application of the custom to Psalmody arose, it seems, from the desire to render unisonous singing in the congregation more agreeable to all true lovers of harmony. In an age when Psalms were sung with great energy by large masses of the people, the men's voices, predominating by their power, would engross the ear, and clearly sustain the melody. The devout musician, leaving the melody to be sung with all simplicity and fullness, employed a few superior voices to encompass it with harmony.

The present reprint of "the booke," though justly due to the memory of Ravenscroft, is undertaken not so much to furnish a store of excellent tunes in suitable form for general use, as to present to musical professors, and to the Church at large, a compendium-model of genuine psalmody. What such psalmody was, as to both melody and harmony, in the most palmy days of "the divine arte," may now be seen and understood. The volume is a storehouse from whence ordinary skill may derive supplies for instant use; and from the contents of which living composers may learn how to arrange any newer productions after the best models of by-gone days.

In pursuance of these objects, it was deemed sufficient to reprint the volume after the present mode, viz.:—by uniting the parts and bringing them into "short score," it was thought that every practised eye would readily discern their relative bearing; while the simple performance of them on a keyed instrument will yield somewhat of their intended effect.

The Volume is handsomely printed in red and black, with initial letters and illuminated binding.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

*To the Editor of the Musical Times.*

SIR,—You have always been an advocate for the improvement of the music in our churches, and have chronicled from time to time the lectures, classes, and other efforts making in different towns in England, whereby the choirs may be better instructed: I have no doubt, therefore, that you will afford me space for the mention of a serious obstruction which my experience has pointed out to me, and which every day offers greater difficulties in the way of music becoming generally a part of service. I allude to the use of *boys* to sing the treble parts in the services and anthems. I have upon rare occasions heard boys with such sweet voices as to have a very excellent effect; the majority of them, however, have very harsh, painful voices, and pronounce their words in an unfeeling and unmeaning manner: but even this imperfect result is obtained only by dint of unceasing labor on the part of the choir-master; and if he be rewarded in the course of years by having bestowed his pains upon a boy who turns out a fair singer, he has hardly congratulated himself upon the result before the boy's voice breaks, and he has all his uncertain labor to re-commence. The difficulty, which is already great, to find boys with the requisite voice, and other qualifications, at the tender age at which it is necessary to commence, is daily increasing with the extension of "places where they sing;" and if we continue to confine the treble parts to boys' voices, I think it will be a means of preventing so desirable an extension. The remedy I should propose, would be the introduction of female voices generally into the churches, aye, and into the cathedrals. I would ask, through your pages, whether there be any more serious objection to it (theologically) than that it has not hitherto been the custom? If this be satisfactorily settled, I think a minor difficulty, which I have had stated to me, of there being objection to a flaunting dress and gay bonnet, could easily be provided for by adopting some uniform of white or black, not much differing from the surplice. I remember at the late coronation of Her present Majesty, that some forty female voices formed part of the choristers, and the orders were that plain white muslin dresses should be worn without colors of any kind, and that no ornaments should be worn in the hair. The effect was, that all the choristers appeared to be dressed alike, the men wearing surplices.

Trusting that the matter may be taken up by more able advocates,

I am, sir, your well-wisher,

A CHORISTER.